DC

WIP

WORK IN PROGRESS

#1

ALL IN

ABSOLUTE BATMAN™

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SNYDER

NICK
DRAGOTTA

15+
TEEN PLUS

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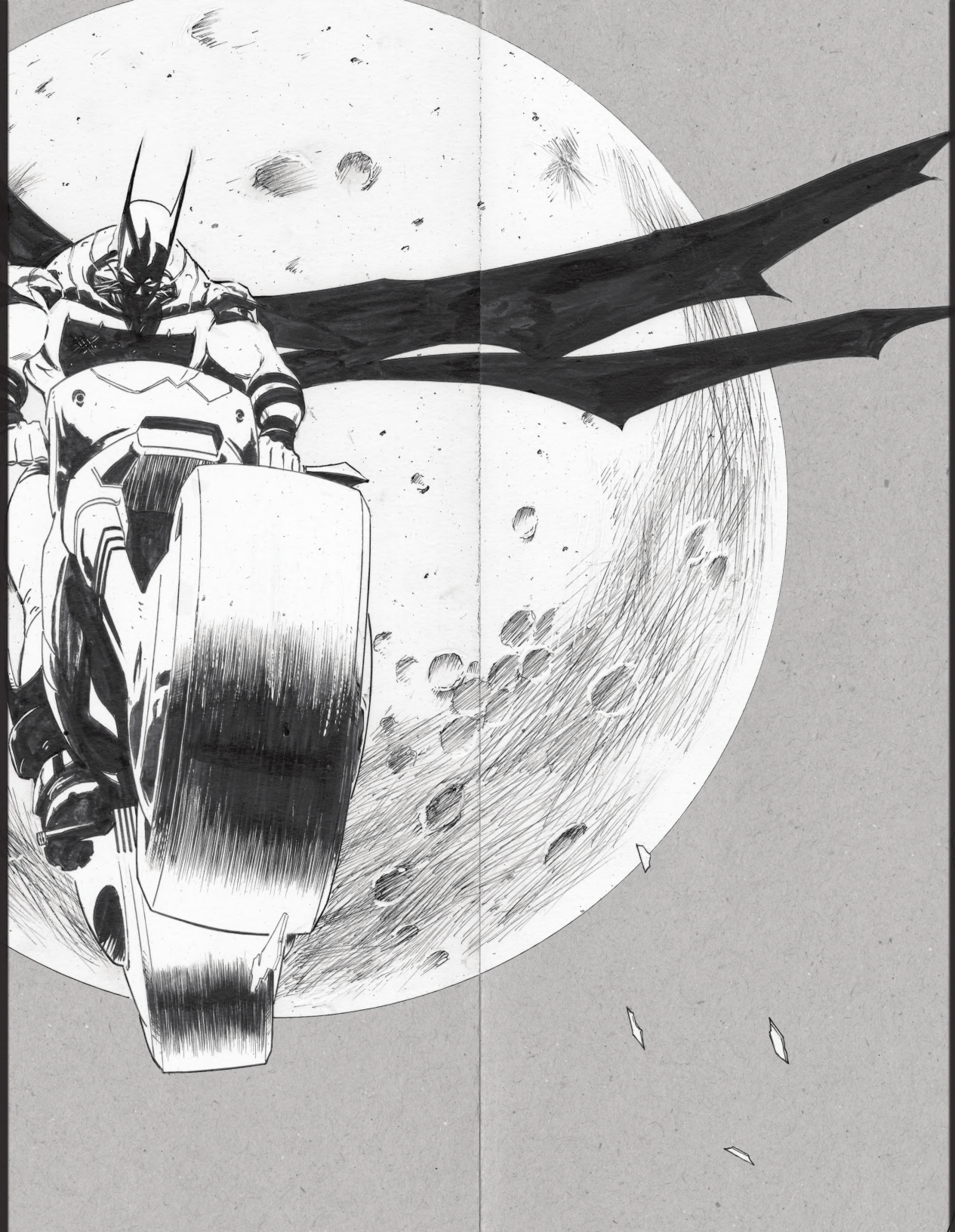


ABSOLUTE BATMAN

This was a dream job.

Scott had bold ideas. A new origin for a new Batman. He's bigger, blue-collar, and born from a tragedy all too common in America.

I remember sharing the thumbnails with Scott for the first time in his studio. We laid the whole story out on the floor. As we walked through it, we knew we had something.

It felt different.

Then we started pushing it, each other. What could be expanded, cut, or used for later issues? It was pure creative collaboration. You don't draw 19-panel pages for lack of ideas.

I must acknowledge my biggest Batman influences: **Frank Miller** and **David Mazzucchelli.** Their work made me want to become an artist. ***The Dark Knight Returns*** and ***Batman: Year One*** were foundational to this book.

To tell this story right, we had to return to the classics. Clarity above all. The art had to be immediate, all in service to the story. Words and pictures working together. Hit the beats.

Comics are a unique medium. You might be drawing the biggest character on the biggest stage, but it still feels so personal. I think Scott would agree.

This was personal.

Nick Dragotta
July 2025

WELCOME TO THE CHIROPTERA HABITAT.

Bats are CRAZY!

I'M BATTY.

AS YOU ENTER THE ENCLOSURE WE ASK YOU DON'T TAKE PICTURES, BUT OBSERVE HOW...

...ats FLY!

Bats WALK ON TUCID

Ba... HAN... IIPSI...

BRUCE!

THERE'LL BE PLENTY OF TIME FOR BATS LATER.

COME ON. LET'S START.

GOTHAM ZOO

ABSOLUTE
BATMAN

"THE ZOO"

PART ONE
OF FIVE

Hello again, Gotham.

It's been a long time.

So, who are you these days? Who have you become while I was gone?

You're prettier, I'll give you that. Taller, brighter.

But deep down...

PARTY ANIMAL GANG SLAUGHTERS NINE IN BRUTAL ATTACK, INCLUDING TWO POLICE OFFICERS...

CRIME WAVE

...something's **changed.**

My third lap around and I still can't find it.

Where's your **heart?**

You used to have a center. Hot and beating.

But something's hollowed you out.

In fact, I barely recognize you anymore.

GOTHAM DELI & GROCERY

OPEN

I'm not sure I like this new you, Gotham.

But that's okay.

I don't think you're going to like me much, either.

My name is **Alfred Pennyworth.**

And I'm here to do some bad things.

SO GOOD TO SEE YOU, OLD FRIEND. I STILL STOCK YOUR FAVORITE.

YOU'RE A GIANT AMONG MEN, AMIR.

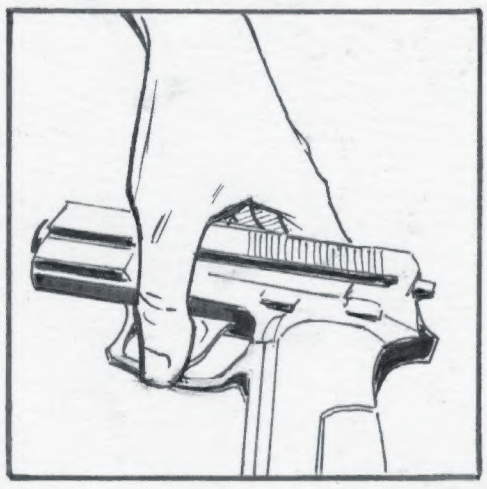
TRUE, TRUE. BUT I WOULDN'T LEAVE YOUR BIKE OUT THERE UNLESS YOU'RE ASKING FOR TROUBLE...

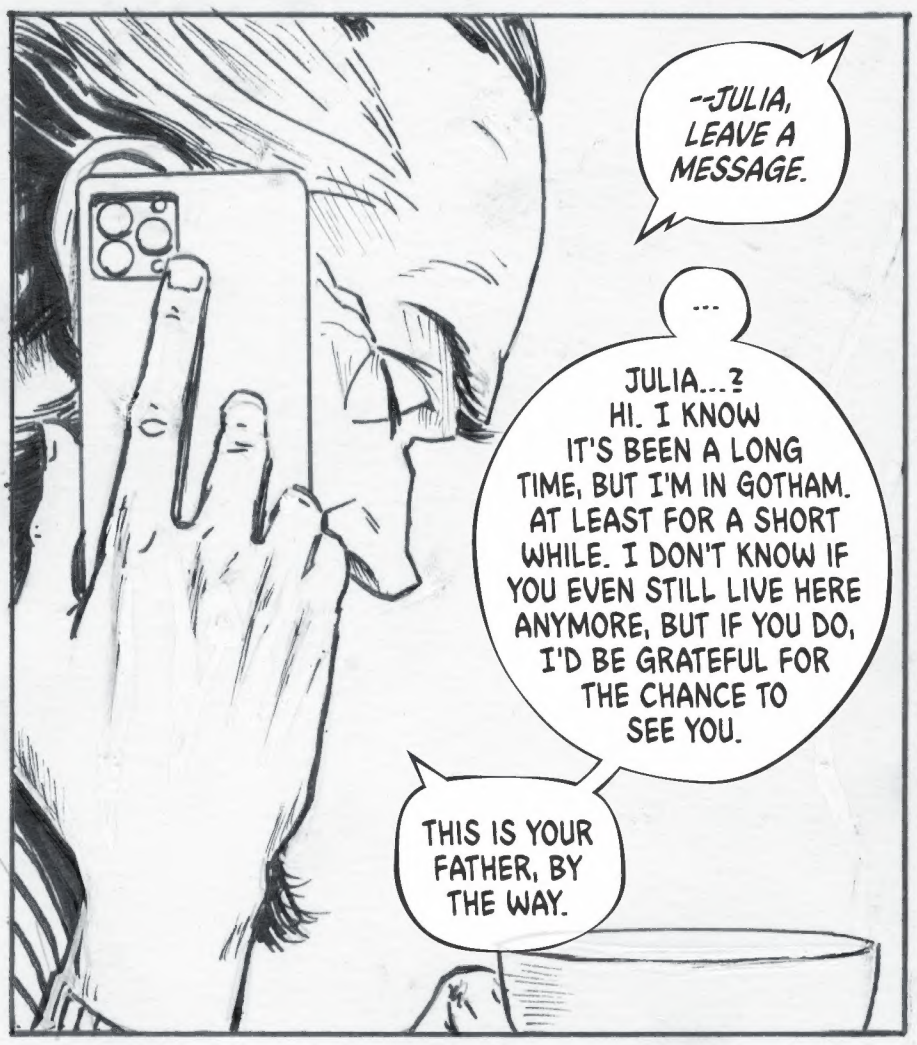
NEVER.

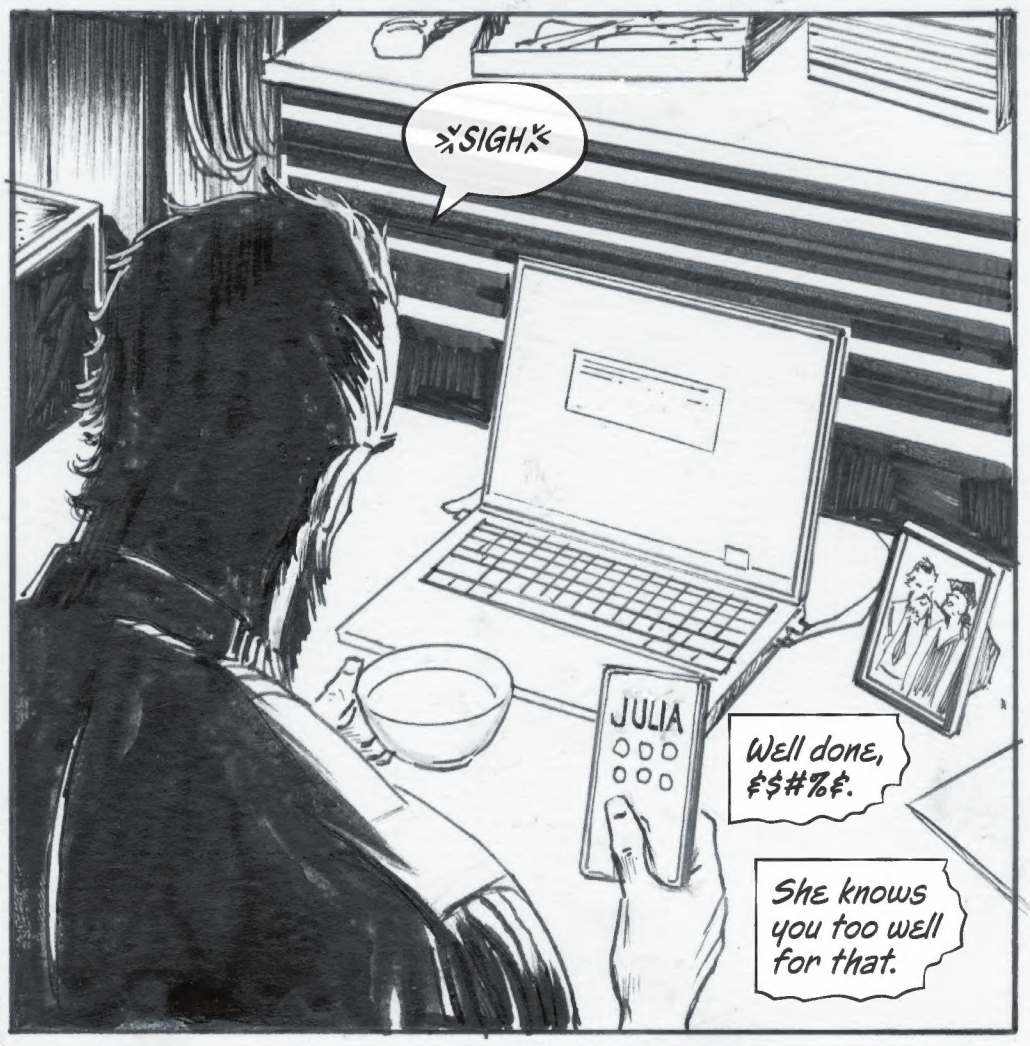
Amir left Kabul during the occupation twenty years ago. He's had me over to his apartment many times. I even taught his boys how to play cricket.

Sometimes I wonder if he'd invite me back if he knew the things I did in that conflict.

But... he runs the only decent tea shop in Gotham, which is why I keep my things next door.




--JULIA, LEAVE A MESSAGE.
...
JULIA...? HI. I KNOW IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME, BUT I'M IN GOTHAM. AT LEAST FOR A SHORT WHILE. I DON'T KNOW IF YOU EVEN STILL LIVE HERE ANYMORE, BUT IF YOU DO, I'D BE GRATEFUL FOR THE CHANCE TO SEE YOU.
THIS IS YOUR FATHER, BY THE WAY.


>SIGH<
JULIA
Well done, €$#%€.
She knows you too well for that.

PENNYWORTH SIGNING IN. CONNECTION SECURE.

AH. TEA AS GOOD AS YOU REMEMBER?

DELIGHTFUL. WHAT'S THE ASSIGNMENT?

I READ THE DOCKET. BUT CAN I ASK WHY YOU PULLED ME OUT OF SINGAPORE? I WAS ***THIS CLOSE*** TO THE TARGET. I'D BEEN CHASING HIM FOR FIVE--

IN THE PAST THREE MONTHS, A GANG KNOWN AS **"THE PARTY ANIMALS"** HAS BEEN SOWING CHAOS, BUTCHERING CITIZENS AT RANDOM, **RAISING THE MURDER RATE** BY 700 PERCENT ALMOST SINGLE-HANDEDLY. A DAY CARE WAS TORCHED YESTERDAY. THEY **DANCED** OUTSIDE WHILE 32 BURNED.

YOU'RE NEEDED **HERE.** AND QUITE FRANKLY, **NO,** YOU MAY NOT. MANNERS...

YOUR ASSIGNMENT IS STRICTLY SURVEILLANCE. GATHER INFORMATION ON THESE "PARTY ANIMALS." BUT DO **NOT** ENGAGE.

ONE NOTE--THERE MIGHT BE... **ANOTHER** PLAYER IN TOWN.

WE'VE ONLY CAUGHT GLIMPSES, BUT HE SEEMS TO BE CIRCLING THE GANG AS WELL. IF HE GETS TOO CLOSE, YOU DO HAVE AUTHORIZATION TO ENGAGE **HIM.**

LOVELY.

WE'RE SENDING COORDINATES TO THE BIKE AS WE SPEAK. PLACES TO SCOPE OUT. POSSIBLE TARGETS.

SAVOR THE TEA. SIGNING OFF.

What's gotten into you, old man? Questioning orders.

You're a **servant.**

They **ring,** you **serve.** Whether it's in Saigon, Khartoum, or...

...Gotham.

I HATE THIS @#$% TOWN.

TONIGHT THIS IS *YOUR* CITY.

CROC'S GYM

WAK

NO FEAR.

WAK

NO WEAKNESS.

UNH!

WAK

WAK

TONIGHT YOU ARE A--

WAK

DING DING

I THINK IT'S MY TURN.

OH, HEY, ***BRUCE!*** SORRY, I WAS JUST KEEPING IT WARM FOR YOU.

BIG DATE TONIGHT. GOTTA GET IN THE RIGHT HEADSPACE. IT'S BRUTAL OUT THERE, YOU KNOW?

DON'T WORRY. LOVE IS IN THE AIR.

NOW MOVE.

BOOM

BOOM

BOOM

DAMN.

HOLY

SO, WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED, CLASS?

BOOM

UM, THAT THIS GUY HAS THE *LIFE?*

HA-HA HA-HA H

TOO

ENLIGHTEN US, BRUCE?

WELL. IT SAYS HERE HE SLEEPS TWENTY HOURS. ***PLUS,*** HE GETS FED PRIME RIB THREE TIMES A DAY. ***AND*** NEVER HAS TO BE AFRAID OF ANYTHING.

BOOM

FAIR. HE MIGHT BE CODDLED, BUT HE'LL NEVER AFFECT ANYTHING.

NEVER ***MEAN*** VERY MUCH.

HE NEVER HAS TO GO TO SCHOOL...

HA-HA HA-HA

SAYS THE BOY TO HIS FATHER, THE TEACHER.

I'M JUST MESSING WITH YOU... MR. WAYNE.

FORGIVEN.

SO, ARE YOU EXCITED FOR THE MOVIE TONIGHT?

I MEAN, I'M EXCITED FOR THE ***NAP.*** DO I REALLY HAVE TO COME?

YES. IT'S THE FILM--

YOU AND MOM MET AT, I GET IT. BUT WHY DO I--

BLAM

OH GOD.

THOOM

REALLY?

@#$%. SORRY, WAYLON.

PH SSSHH

SIGH SO...LET'S MAKE IT *NINETY* FOR THE BAG.

THIRTY FOR THE *SAND--*

WHAT? THE SAND *COMES* IN THE BAG.

FOR THE *CLEANUP* OF THE SAND, MY FRIEND. MY TIME IS COSTLY THESE DAYS.

YOU'RE *REALLY* GOING THROUGH WITH IT?

YEP. I'M THINKING OF CALLING THE PLACE *"WAYLON'S SCALES OF GOTHAM."*

OZZIE HOOKED ME UP WITH THE *EXOTIC-PET LICENSE.* WENT IN WITH ME, TOO.

OZZIE? WAY...

...HE'S GOING TO GET BUSTED ANY DAY NOW.

DON'T YOU WATCH THOSE NATURE SHOWS, BROTHER? PENGUINS KNOW HOW TO HIDE THEIR EGGS. BESIDES, HE'S OUR BOY. SPEAKING OF WHICH...

I CAN'T.

YOU HAVEN'T COME TO ***POKER*** IN MONTHS, MAN. EVERYONE'S IN THIS WEEK. ***EDDIE, HARVEY, OZ.*** I'M EVEN TRYING TO GET ***SELINA*** TO DIAL--

I SAID I ***CAN'T.***

AT ***LEAST*** TELL ME YOU'RE GOING TO THE ***TOWN HALL*** TONIGHT.

I'LL BUY YOU A NEW BAG SOON AS I GET PAID.

COME ON, MAN. THE WHOLE CITY'S COMING APART. THESE ***PARTY ANIMAL*** @#$%?

...YOU SAW WHAT THEY DID TO THAT ***FAMILY*** YESTERDAY? I ALMOST THREW UP WATCHING THE FOOTAGE. TYING THE MOM AND BABY TO THE DAMN BUMPER AND SEEING WHICH ONE--

I GOTTA GO.

... WHAT IS GOING ***ON*** WITH YOU?

HEY, BRUCE! I'M ***TALKING*** TO YOU!

THIS IS OUR ***HOME,*** MAN...

...SOMEONE'S GOT TO DO SOMETHING!

THAT POSSIBLY GO ANY *LOUDER?*

OF COURSE! *DR. BENJAMIN!*

BETTER? HE HAS A PHD IN MUSICOLOGY, YOU KNOW.

ARE YOU SERIOUS? IS HE SERIOUS?

WHAT DO YOU THINK THIS IS, SOME KIND OF #$% *FESTIVITY?*

YES.

YES, I DO.

RO? YOU COMING, BABY?

WELL RUMOR IS, THESE *PARTY ANIMAL* PIECES OF @#$%, THEY'RE *YOUR* GUYS.

KILLING PEOPLE RIGHT AND LEFT. OLD LADIES. KIDS. FOR WHAT? WHY?

THERE'S *RULES,* UNDERSTAND? GOTHAM ISN'T JUST--

ROMAN?

HEY, KIDDO.

WHEN ARE YOU ALL COMING TO DANCE?

MR. MARONI? MR. FALCONE? WHAT DO YOU SAY? SHALL WE? THE NIGHT IS YOUNG.

IT'S THREE IN THE #$%& MORNING! PUT THAT DAMN KID TO BED, TURN THE MUSIC OFF, AND *LISTEN UP.*

DR. BENJAMIN! OFF, PLEASE.

OKAY, I'M LISTENING.

WE HEAR *RUMORS* ABOUT YOU. HEAR YOU'RE SOME KIND OF BIG SHOT...

GOT GUYS ALL OVER THE WORLD, DIFFERENT ANIMALS, *GOATS* HERE, *GIRAFFES* THERE. YOU'RE CONNECTED TO SOME GLOBAL, SICK, ILLUMINATI WHATEVER THE HELL.

BUT THE TRUTH IS WE'VE BEEN IN BUSINESS HERE FOR 150 YEARS, UNDERSTAND? A *CENTURY* AND A *HALF.* THAT'S HISTORY. YOU NEED TO RESPECT IT.

THAT'S RIGHT. AND WE'VE GOT *BROTHERS* AND *COUSINS,* AND GUYS ALL OVER TOWN. SO TAKE YOUR LITTLE PARTY BOAT AND SAIL AWAY BY DAWN. *DAWN* OR YOU'RE *DEAD.* YOU HEAR US?

BABY. SHOW THEM THE *MASKS.*

GOOD IDEA, SWEETHEART.

FRIENDS, I'M AFRAID YOU HAVE ME ALL WRONG. *HISTORY* IS WHAT I'M ALL ABOUT. THAT'S WHAT WE'RE *CELEBRATING* HERE...

...ITS *END.*

WOW. MORE MASKS.

NOT JUST ANY MASKS. ***DEATH MASKS.*** I COLLECT THEM. THAT ONE IS RUMORED TO BE ***SOCRATES*** HIMSELF. ONLY TWO EXIST IN THE WORLD. ONE IN MYCENAEAN GOLD AND THIS ONE, MADE OF VIRGIN MARBLE DUST.

KLIK

THAT'S ***MARTIN LUTHER*** TO YOUR LEFT. ONE OF A KIND. MADE OF BEESWAX AND PINE RESIN.

THAT'S ***GEORGE WASHINGTON*** THERE. GYPSUM PLASTER FROM VIRGINIA'S OWN QUARRIES.

AND THAT ***THERE,*** MR. MARONI...

...IS YOUR ***BROTHER.***

...SAL? WHAT THE...

AND ***THAT'S*** YOUR ***COUSIN,*** MR. FALCONE.

AND ***ALL*** THE REST OF THEM ALONGSIDE.

GURK!

WITH TWO PLACES LEFT, JUST FOR YOU. RIGHT, KIDDO?

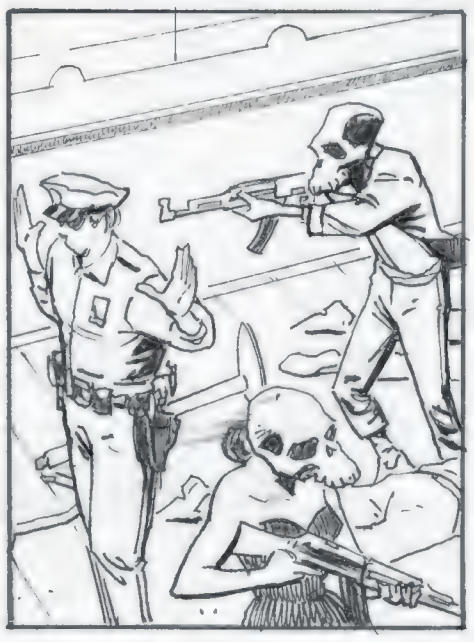
YOU #$%&--

TING

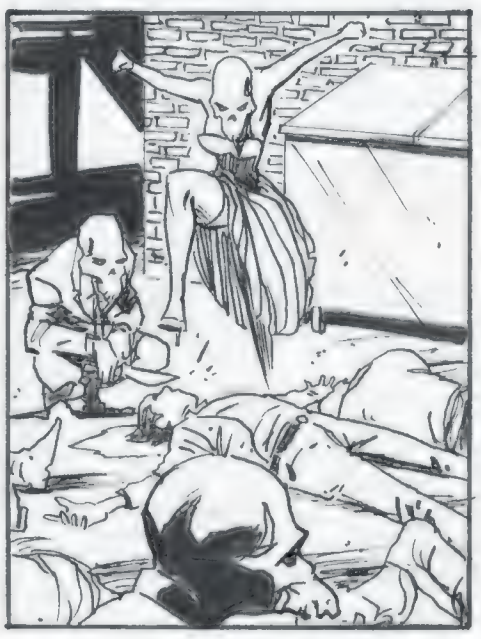
DR. BENJAMIN! TURN IT BACK UP, PLEASE!

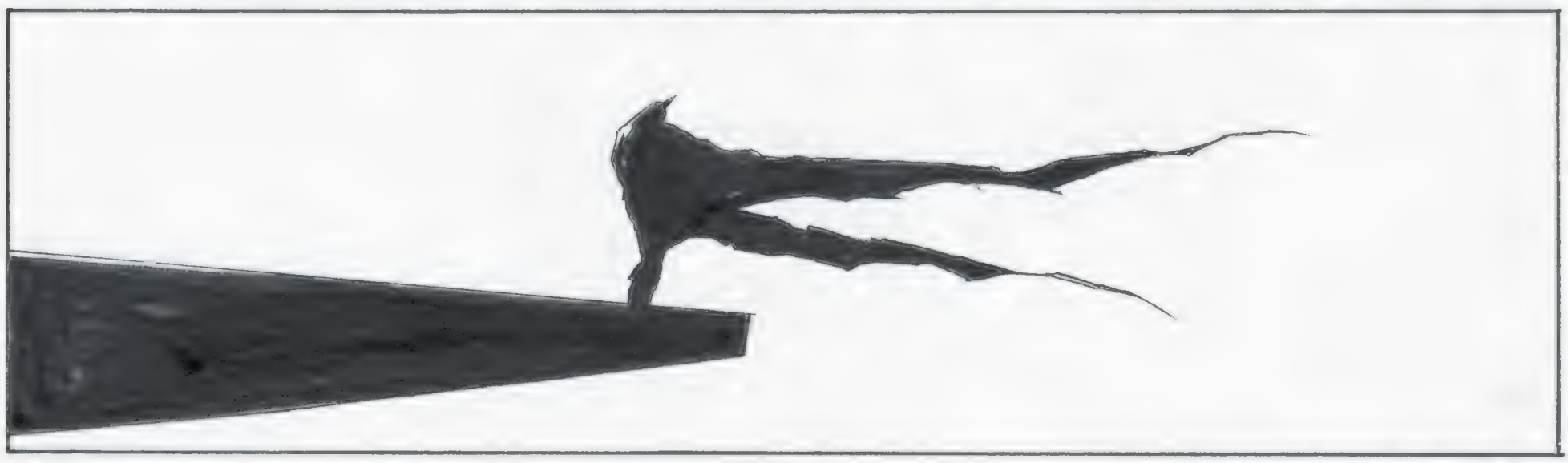
--SIX MORE MURDERED JUST TODAY--

THE QUESTION IS, WHO **ARE** THESE MONSTERS, THE "PARTY ANIMALS"? SOME SAY KIDS GONE MAD--



--HACKED APART WITH MACHETES. WE ARE WARNING YOU, THE FOOTAGE YOU'RE ABOUT TO SEE IS DISTURBING. YOU MIGHT WANT SMALL CHILDREN TO--





--TRUTH IS, ALL OF US HERE AT THE STATION ARE PRAYING FOR GOTHAM. FOR ITS PEOPLE, ITS FUTURE...

--TONIGHT **MAYOR JIM GORDON** IS HOLDING AN EMERGENCY TOWN HALL TO DISCUSS WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE PARTY ANIMALS' REIGN OF TERROR. HERE'S HOPING IT'S **EVENTFUL**...

--YOU'RE A DISGRACE, GORDON!

--STEP DOWN BEFORE--

--IS A JOKE--

--VOTING *HILL*--

PLEASE, EVERYONE. ONE AT A TIME!

ALL RIGHT, GO AHEAD, SIR.

YOU RAN ON YOUR RECORD AS A COP, ***GORDON.*** AND WE GAVE YOU A CHANCE, BUT UNDER MAYOR HILL, AT LEAST WE WEREN'T BEING KILLED OFF!

HAMILTON HILL IS A DAMN CROOK, MAN. WE ALL KNOW THAT.

MAYBE HE ***IS*** A CROOK, BUT AT LEAST HE'S ***TOUGH!***

HE'D FIGHT BACK!

WE ARE FIGHTING BACK, BUT ***THIS*** GANG, WE HAVE NO IDEA--

I RUN FINGER TAILORS ON 27TH STREET. EVERY SINGLE WEEKDAY FOR 71 YEARS I'VE WALKED TO MY SHOP, EXCEPT THE DAY MY SON WAS BORN AND THE DAY MY WIFE DIED.

18,302 TIMES I'VE WALKED THERE.

BUT I DON'T WALK THERE ANYMORE. I DON'T WALK ANYWHERE, BECAUSE I'M ***SCARED!***

Even from out here I can feel it.

That mix of fear and rage. The explosive tremble in the air before something bad happens.

And then I see them.

Ape skulls and bad prom clothes. Heavily armed.

Laughing and giddy. Gleeful.

This is going to be ***bad.***

PENNYWORTH REPORTING, SIR. PARTY ANIMALS ARE AT THE SITE. HEAVILY ARMED.

COPY. REPORT BACK AFTER INCIDENT.

...

MASS CASUALTIES POSSIBLE, SIR. PERMISSION TO ENGAGE IF--

PERMISSION DENIED, PENNYWORTH. WHATEVER HAPPENS THERE, YOU OBSERVE ***ONLY.***

I PROMISE YOU, WE *WILL* BRING THESE CRIMINALS TO JUSTICE. NOW, I'M WORKING 'ROUND THE CLOCK WITH CITY POLICE TO--

THE *POLICE?!* THE PARTY ANIMALS JUST TORCHED A STATION TWO HOURS AGO!

IT'S ALL OVER THE NEWS. COPS RUNNING AROUND ON FIRE. DOWN ON KANE AND THIRD.

THE COPS CAN'T DO A @#$% THING!

IS THAT SO...?

EASY, BULLOCK.

GP

RRRR...

PEOPLE! LOOK AT US! THIS IS WHAT THEY WANT!

ALL OF US FIGHTING, SCARED, BLAMING EACH OTHER.

BUT JIM GORDON SERVED THIS CITY HONORABLY FOR A LONG TIME. I WORK WITH HIS OFFICE, AND I TRUST HIM. I ALSO *TRUST* US TO BE BETTER THAN THIS.

BECAUSE IT'S NOT *JUST* UP TO HIM OR COMMISSIONER BULLOCK. IT'S UP TO *ALL* OF US TO STOP THESE KILLERS.

THIS IS OUR CITY, AND *TOGETHER,* WE WILL--

TNK TNK

BANG

I THINK THE WORD YOU'RE LOOKING FOR, MISS, IS *DIE!*

UP HERE! LOOK AT ME. WHATEVER YOU WANT, DEAL WITH ME.

HI, JIMMY.

BYE, JIMMY.

TAT TAT TAT

AGH!

DAD!

BARBARA! JUST GET EVERYONE OUT OF HERE! NOW!

ANYONE WANT TO BEG? TELL US ABOUT YOUR KIDS? YOUR SICK GRANDMA? WE LOVE THAT...

CHIK CHIK

NO? ALL RIGHT, THEN.

RIP 'EM UP!

TiWiP

ACK!

WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?

SLAM

EVERYONE MOVE TO THE BACK! AND STAY DOWN!

MY GOD... THERE'S ***DOZENS*** OF THEM OUT THERE! A WHOLE ARMY!

WE NEED TO SECURE THE--

WHATEVER YOU HEAR, YOU ***DO NOT*** OPEN THIS DOOR.

PENNYWORTH? REPORT? CASUALTY COUNT?

...NONE. THE OTHER PLAYER JUST ARRIVED.

IF HE DISRUPTS INTEL GATHERING, YOU ARE TO ENGAGE.

PENNYWORTH?

...COPY.

UNH...

WHAT HAPPENED? WHO--

TAT RATTA TAT TAT TAT RATTA

UP THERE! SHRED HIM!

POW POW POW POW

TING PING TING PING TING PING TING PING TING PING TING PING

TAH PAP PAP

BAP BAP BAP BAP

BANG
BANG

GRK!

THOOK

AAAAAAHHHH--

CRASH

WAITWAIT--

THOK

DONK

CLANK

CLANK

WHAM

KRAK

Well, well. Look at you go...

...whoever you are, you've got flair, I'll give you that.

IS THE OTHER PLAYER DISRUPTING THE SCENE, PENNYWORTH?

...

STILL GATHERING DATA.

...let's see what you can really do.

All right, big guy...

You're fast.

Steady.

TOK

TOK

TOK

Above all, focused.

SHK

AGH!

SHK

You've been waiting for this, haven't you?

Yeah, you have.

CHKK

CHKK

CHKK

You're trained, too.

Mixed martial arts.

Your own blend.

Muay Thai.

BJJ.

But you're a striker above all.

Brutal, yet precise.

You're putting on a **show.**

A leg **stomped on** so everyone hears the **crack.** An arm **snapped** over your knee.

Sending a message.

You're enjoying it, too.

And the **knife work...** my lord.

So bloody, yet you miss each artery by just enough.

No fatalities at all. Not one.

So, an **idealist...** bloody hell.

MOVE!

THIS ***HAND*** HAS KILLED MORE PEOPLE THAN YOU CAN COUNT. NOW I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU ONE CHANCE.

...GET THE #$%& OUT OF OUR WAY.

SHUNK

RAHHH!!

...I... YOU...

I HEAR THEY CAN REATTACH THEM SOMETIMES.

THERE'S A HOSPITAL THREE BLOCKS SOUTH OF HERE. OR IT IS EAST? I CAN'T SEEM TO REMEMBER ALL OF A SUDDEN...

...BUT I'D RUN.

THE REST OF YOU...

...I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU ONE CHANCE TO GET THE #$%&...

...OUT OF MY WAY!

Well done.

But if you were a true tactician, you'd have set up a trap for those fleeing the--

BOOM

HEH.

PENNYWORTH! WHAT'S GOING ON THERE? THE SATELLITE IMAGES MAKE NO SENSE. WHOEVER THE PLAYER IS, YOU ARE TO ENGAGE. COPY?

COPY.

MOAN.

GROAN.

...

...

...

THAT IS THE SOUND OF A DC-34 AUTOMATIC SHOTGUN, SON. THERE ARE ONLY THREE OF THEM IN THE WORLD. IT COULD BLOW YOUR BRAINS ALL OVER THIS SIDEWALK...

WHIR...

...BEFORE YOU EVEN BLINK.

VRAK

THOK

SOUNDS DANGEROUS.

The next day, everyone's talking about it.

"Who is the **Batman?**"

So who are you, really...?

...Bruce Wayne?

You hide your tracks well.

But it's easy when you're no one.

Just some guy. 24 years old. Mom is a social worker. Dad is a teacher.

You grow up in Crime Alley. High friends in low places. A tight group.

You're smart. Excel in school. Your parents have you tested and you score near genius level.

Then, in fifth grade, you win a student engineering competition, creating a mobile, collapsible bridge that can be used to bring aid to locations hit by catastrophic damage from war, cataclysm...

The design is origami-like. Based on the anatomy of a bat wing.

And the prize is a trophy...

...and a trip for your whole class to **the Gotham Zoo.**

Where it starts...

BLAM

FOLLOW ME! *NOW!*

BLAM

BLAM

BLAM

HURRY, THIS WAY! INTO THE BAT HOUSE!

BLAM

EVERYONE INSIDE!

EXIT

GET TO THE BACK.

BAT CLOSURE

DAD, GET INSIDE!

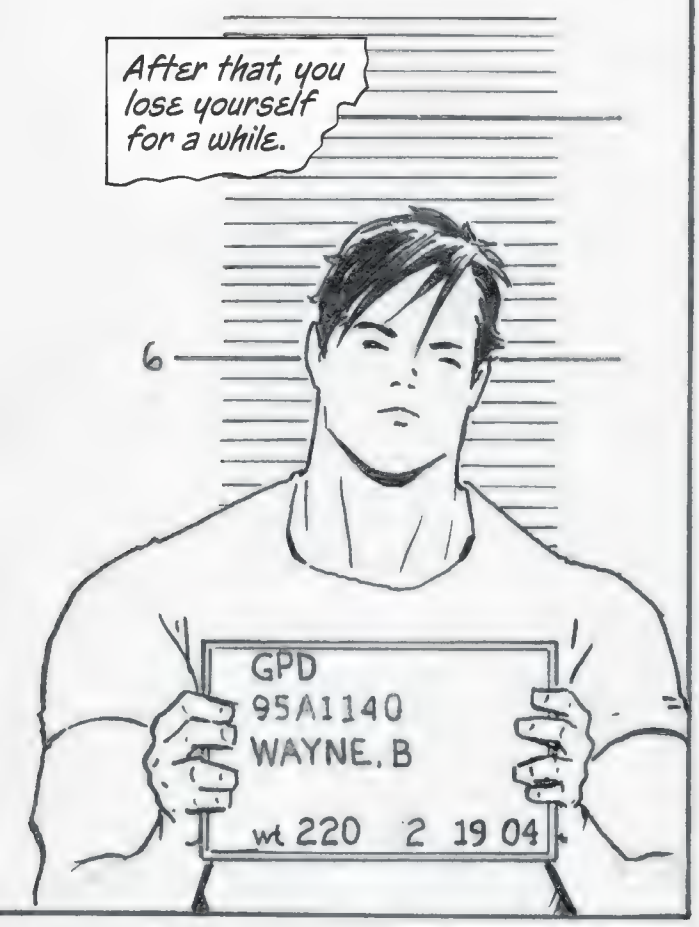
DAD!

BLAM

DAD!

BRUCE, WHATEVER YOU HEAR, YOU ***DO NOT*** OPEN THIS DOOR.

BLAM


After that, you lose yourself for a while.
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GPD
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WAYNE, B
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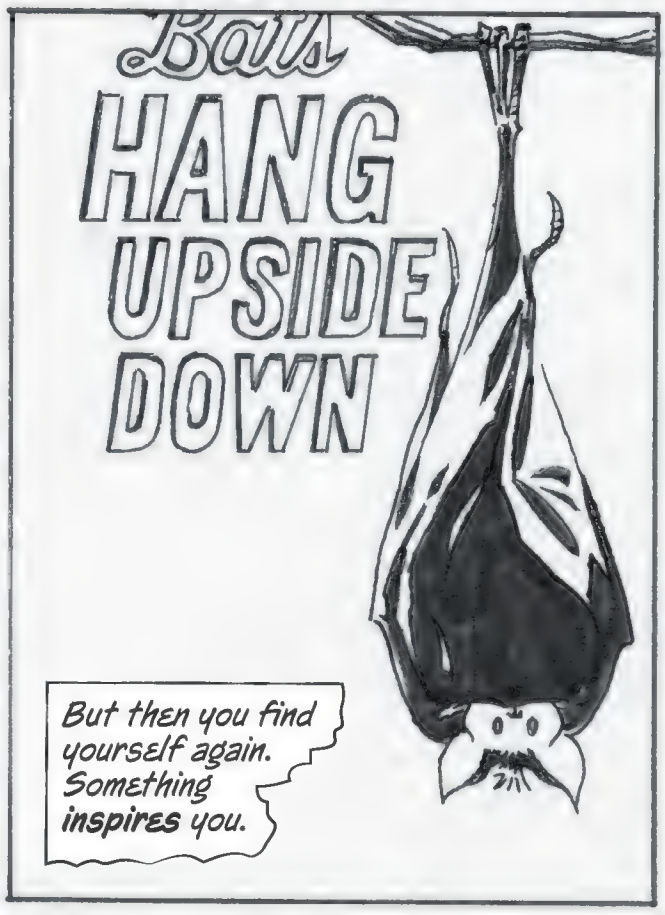
Lash out. Rage at the world.
GOTHAM ZOO


Bats
HANG UPSIDE DOWN
But then you find yourself again. Something **inspires** you.

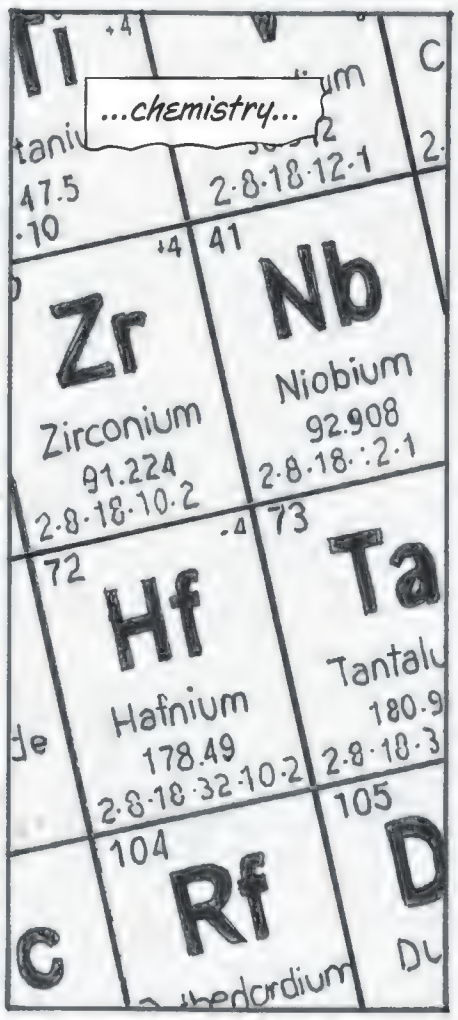
Bats
WALK ON THEIR HANDS

You straighten out. You go back to school and get a scholarship to the best university in the state.
But when you get there, you're injured in the first week, a soft-tissue tear.

I've seen the X-rays, though, and I've been in command of men who've faked injury to escape duty, and I suspect that's exactly what you did.

But **why?** You were good enough to be a star, even go pro.
Because you were saving your body for last night. For **all this,** whatever it is you've built.

You study applied mechanics...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Nb
Niobium
92.908
Hf
Hafnium
178.49
2·8·18·32·10·2
Ta
Rf

...criminal psychology...

...military theory...

...sociocultural history. Everything to prepare...

...and then you come home.

You set up in Gotham and work in the power grid.

Then the water department.

Next, sanitation.

After that? You intern at City Hall, studying public policy, macro and micro.

Learning your city. The body, the brain, every damn part of Gotham.

GOTHAM CITY HALL

Until finally, you come full circle. Ever the engineer.

Creating. Building. You even fix what you break... repairing the stairs you blew up last night.

You've **built** something here, Bruce.

I see it now. And it's impressive. Truly.

But I've taken down men like you before. In cities, in jungles, in deserts, all over the world.

Because you're **crusaders.**

And crusaders always have a weakness.

And yours...

CHK

...is sitting right there.

>TT<...SERIOUSLY? MAKING YOUR POOR MOTHER WAIT AN ***HOUR*** FOR YOU OUT HERE ON THE COLD, HARD STREETS OF GOTHAM...

SORRY, MOM. I JUST... SWUNG BY THE ZOO.

>SIGH< FORGIVEN.

I HEARD WHAT HAPPENED AT THE TOWN HALL LAST NIGHT. ARE YOU OKAY?

THEY BUSTED IN ***RIGHT*** WHEN I WAS STARTING TO WIN OVER THE CROWD, BUT OTHER THEN THAT...

I could kill you right here in front of her. It'd be easy.

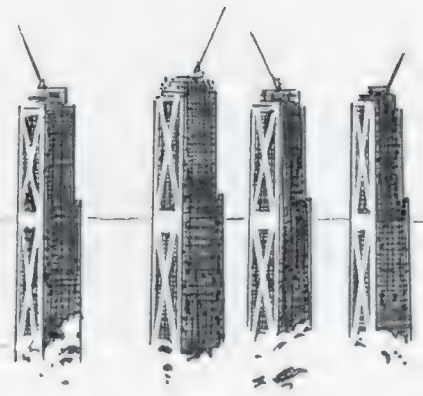
It's what I should do.

BZZT BZZT

FROM JULIA:
NEVER CONTACT ME AGAIN!

JULIA

But you're just a €$#% kid.



THERE'S MORE TO THESE APE SKULL MASKS THEN FIRST APPEARS.

THEY AREN'T JUST FOR PROTECTION, OR EVEN INTIMIDATION.

WHEN I CRACKED ONE OPEN, THE CIRCUITRY INSIDE--

END RECORDING.

PRETTY SMART, MATE. HIDING OUT IN THE TOPS OF THESE BUILDINGS.

ALL THE TOP FLOORS ARE OWNED BY COMPANIES AND OLIGARCHS WHO NEVER USE THEM. JUST HOLLOW INVESTMENTS.

YOU KNOW THIS, THOUGH. BECAUSE YOU WORKED ON THEM.

BUT I'M CLOSING YOU DOWN RIGHT NOW.

AW-- THOUGHT YOU WERE BETTER THAN THAT, SON.

YOU GET CORNERED AND ALL THOSE IDEALS GO OUT THE WINDOW?

GIVE ME THE GUN, KID.

YOU'RE NO KILLER.

BLAM

VRRRRRRRRRRRR

And then a few things happen very fast.

VRRR

First, I realize the little #$%& modified my prize shotgun to be nonlethal. Ruined it.

VRRRRRRRRRRRRR

Second, I hear that very gun clatter by my side as though he's saying, "Keep it."

Third, I hear this...**roar**...

...the roar of my own damn bike.

Fourth, his voice, as he tells me, "You're not the only one who follows people."

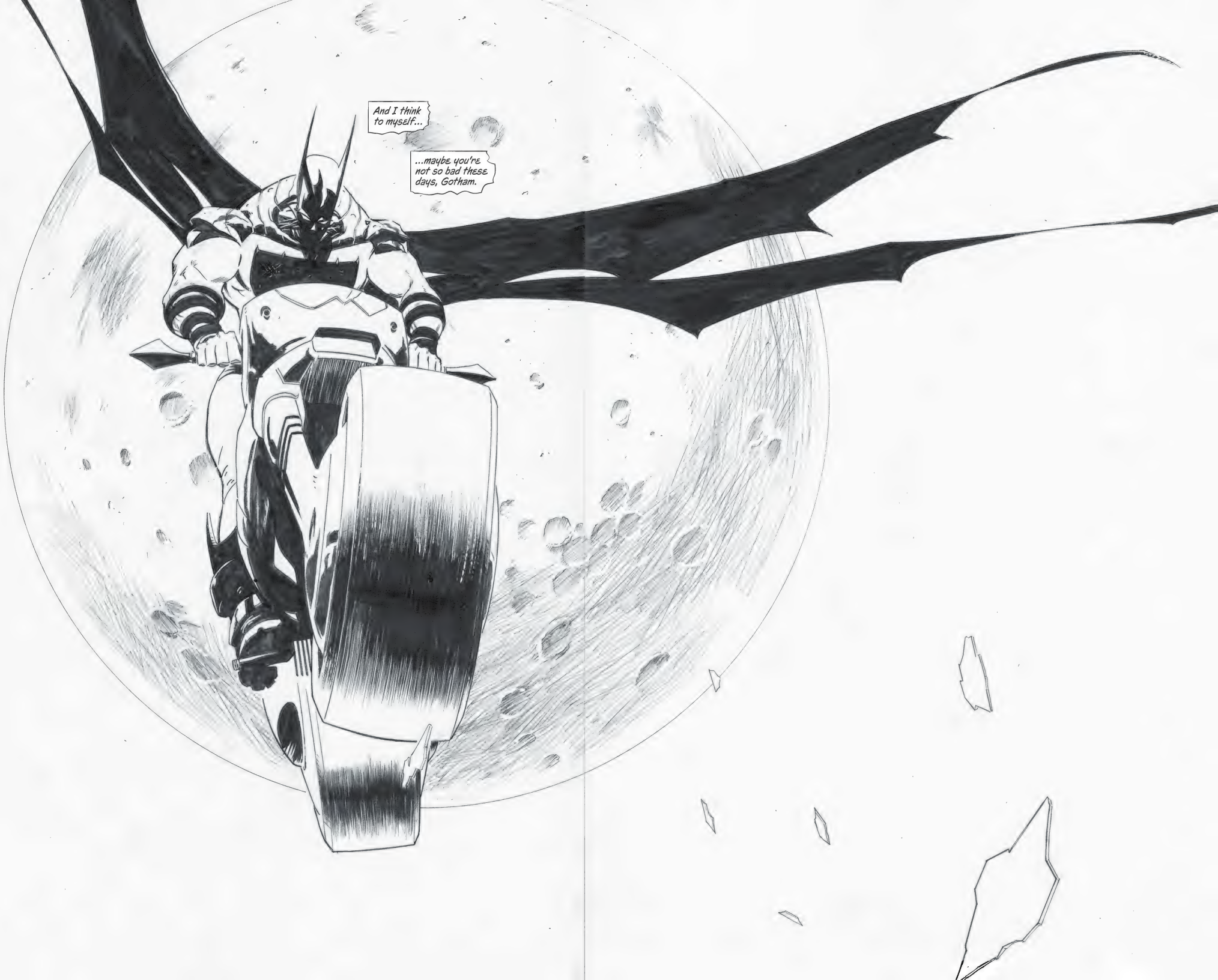
And lastly, I hear the sound of glass shattering as he rides out the window...

...a thousand feet up.

KOFF WHERE THE HELL IS HE GOING TO *LAND?*

Bats are CRAZY!

I'M BATTY.


And I think to myself...
...maybe you're not so bad these days, Gotham.

EPILOGUE.

I'LL GET HIM NEXT TIME HE INTERFERES.

UNDERSTOOD. JUST STAY FOCUSED ON THE PARTY ANIMALS.

AND...FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH...

...YOUR OLD TARGET? WE LOST HIM SOMEWHERE IN THE PHILIPPINES. HE'S IN THE WIND. THOUGHT YOU SHOULD KNOW.

Lost him.

Five years I tracked him. While he studied with Henri Ducard in France, then killed the poor @#$%.

While he trained with the League of Assassins, then killed **them.**

Now...in the wind.

MANILA.

SEMICONDUCTOR MANUFACTURING PLANT.

SO JUST "SIR," NOTHING ELSE? NO MR. THIS OR THAT?

NOPE. THEY'RE ALL FAKE ANYWAY...

...JACK, ARTHUR. HELL, EVEN I DON'T KNOW HIS REAL NAME.

WHEN YOU'RE ONE OF THE THIRTY RICHEST MEN ON THE PLANET, YOU CAN BE WHOEVER YOU WANT, I GUESS.

THINK HE'D WANT TO BE MY RICH, GENEROUS BEST FRIEND?

"DON'T DO THAT. DON'T JOKE."

"WHY?"

"YOU DIDN'T HEAR? THE GUY NEVER LAUGHS. NOT AT ANYTHING. EVER.

"THAT'S WHY THEY CALL HIM...

"...THE *JOKER.*"

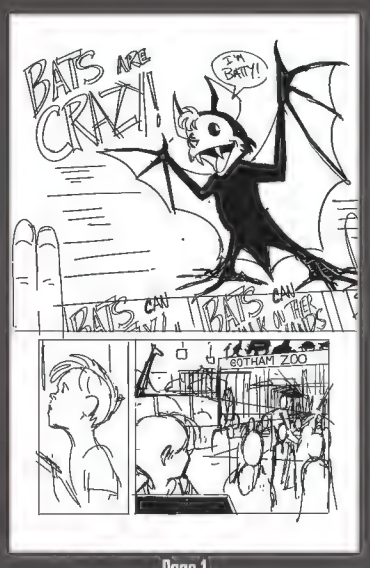
TO BE CONTINUED...

Absolute Batman #1
Cover art by **Nick Dragotta**

Absolute Batman #1
Second printing cover art by **Nick Dragotta**

ABSOLUTE BATMAN #1 LAYOUTS

Scott Snyder viewing the layouts of ***Absolute Batman*** #1



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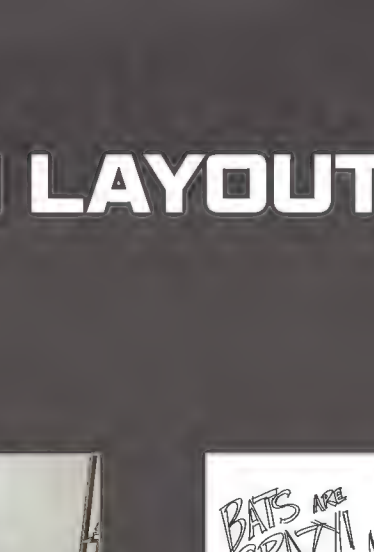

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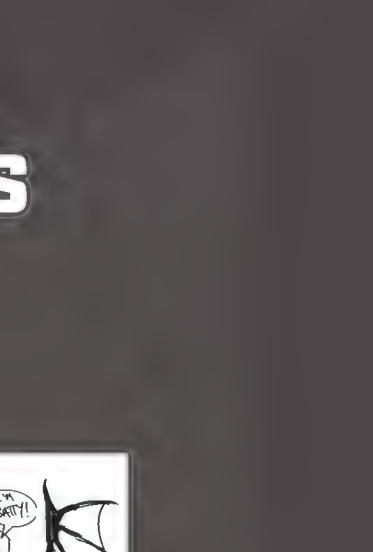

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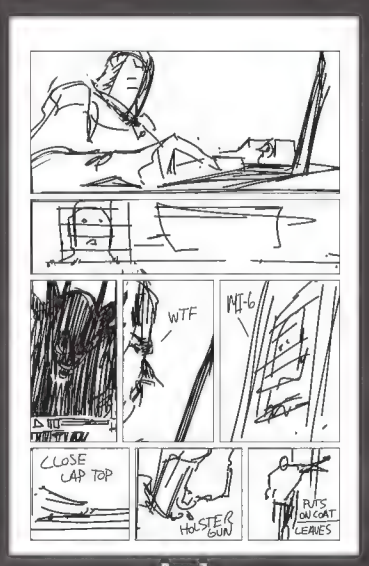

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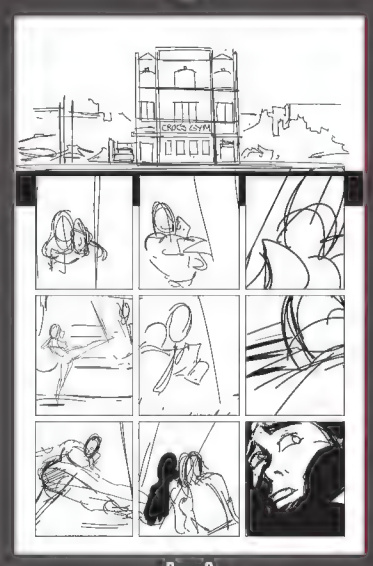

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ABSOLUTE BATMAN #1 LAYOUTS

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NO SHOW YOU
ENJOY W/ YOU
ROMAN GODSMACK
IN A MINUTE GIG-OLA
IT'S 2 - IN MORNIN
OK JR/ I OFFERED YOU A CHANCE
DON'T WANT R. VARG. BLOOS. COUSINS.
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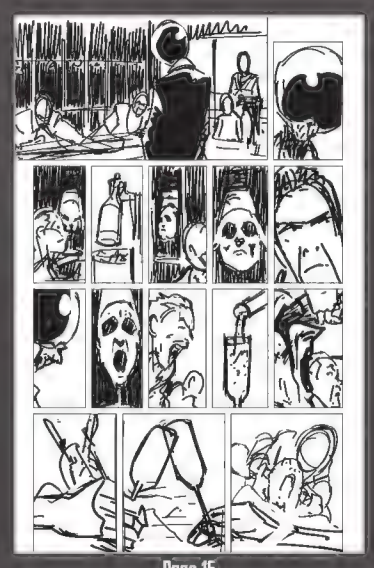
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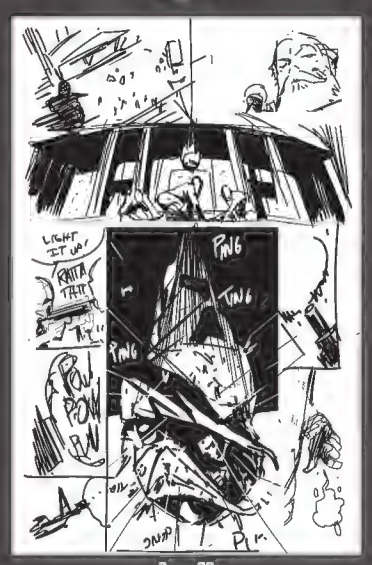

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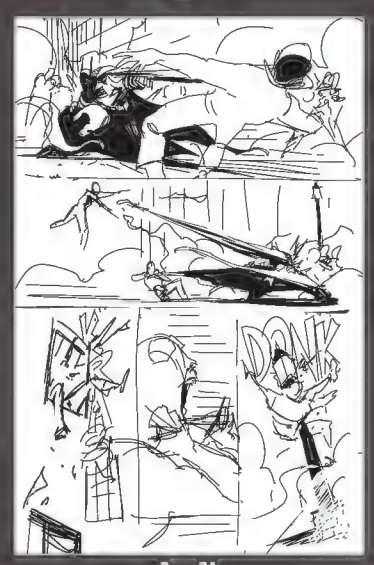

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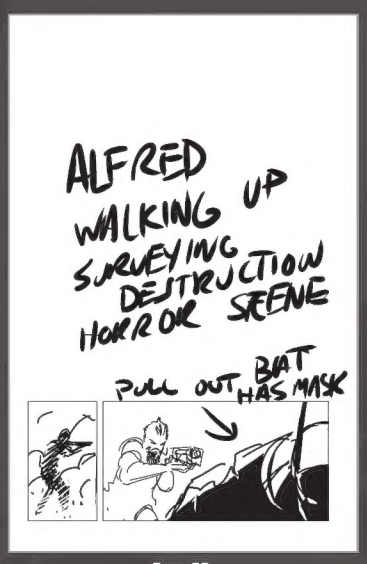

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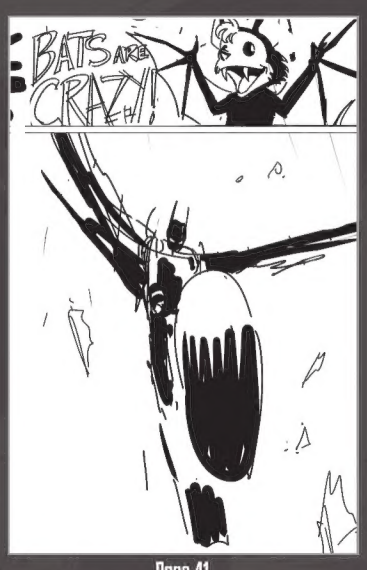

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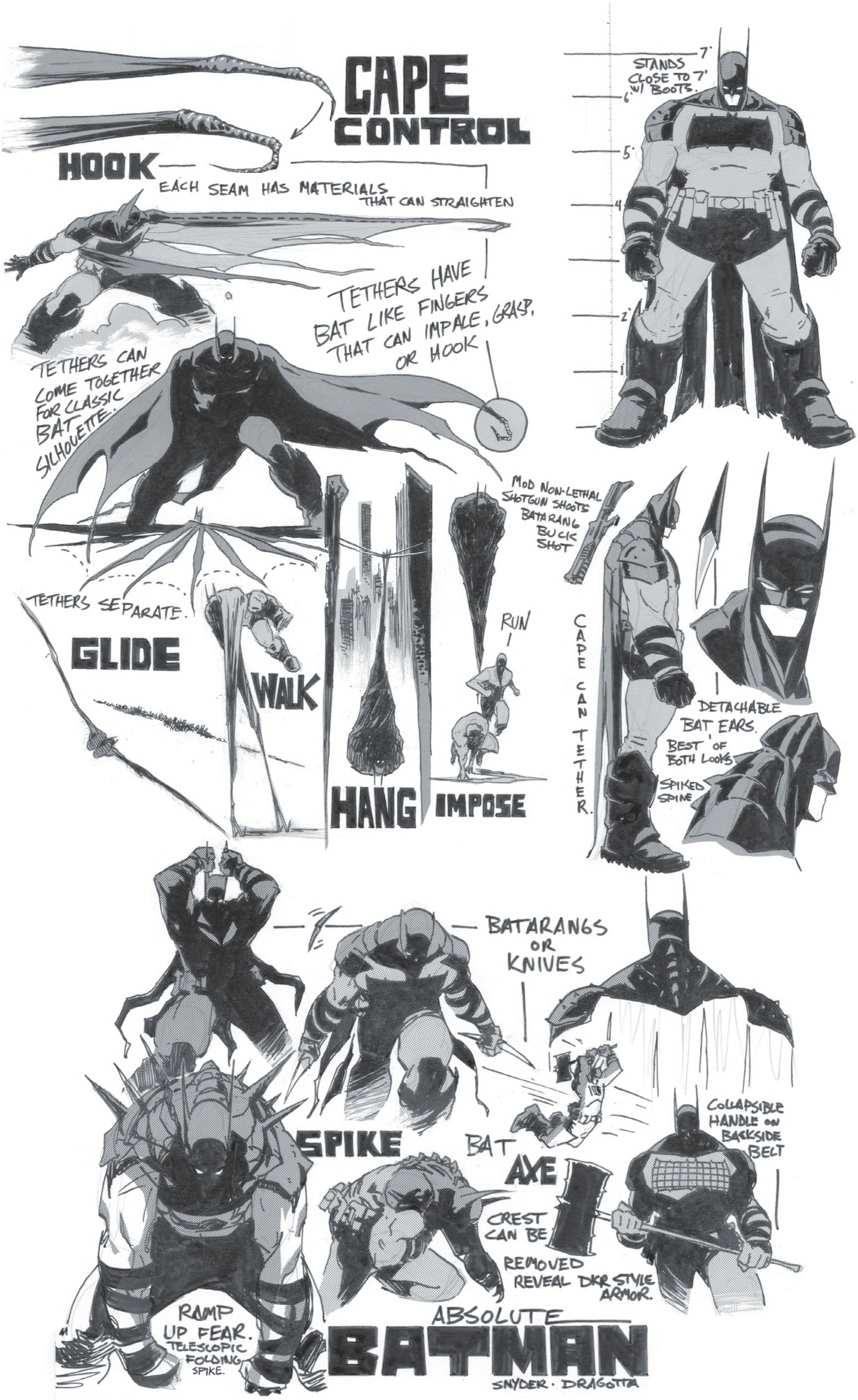

***Absolute Batman* #1**
Process art by **Nick Dragotta**

WORK IN PROGRESS

SON OF ULTRON